

Ashṭāvakra Samhitā

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Introduction

The author of the introduction to Swāmi Nityaswarūpānanda's *Ashṭāvakra Samhitā* says: 'For direct realization the spiritual aspirant must undergo a course of sādhana under the guidance and supervision of a guru who has himself gone through the grind and envisaged the Truth face to face.'

This is classical explanation, but it is not true. In the psychological path of Vedānta or the Direct Perception Method, no sādhana properly speaking is needed. You are made to perceive the Truth positively. If reason is reference to past experiences, since your own BEING is best experienced, references to it must be reasonable to you. Man's higher reason works (Viveka-vritti).

The 'limitations of reason' are transcended 'by the help of a suprarational organon called self-realisation, which directly intuits the Truth.' Viveka-vritti is enough.

'By dispassion', says the author (quoting from *Yoga-sūtra* 1.12), 'the evil course of the mind is arrested, and the practice of discrimination sets free the good course.' There is no need to cultivate dispassion; simply analyse passion. Look at the world deeply enough and dispose of it; don't avoid it. Take hold of the ego. The Real is part of it; ego is only expanded mind. Morality will follow your realization. Then you will have no temptation any more. Or if an object attracts you, you will know its pleasure or its beauty is really in you. So go to the central problem first. Then you need not deal with the evil which is non-existent.

Note on translation

The 4th edition (April 1976) of Svāmi Nityaswarūpānanda's translation sometimes differs a little from that reproduced by Shri Ātmānanda. It is not clear how far the differences may be edition revisions and how far adaptation by Shri Ātmānanda (or by his followers). Differing words and passages are shown italicized.

1. Instruction on Self-realisation

Janaka said:

1. How can knowledge be acquired? How can liberation be attained? How is dispassion possible? Tell me this, Oh Lord.

Ashṭāvakra said:

2. If you aspire after liberation, my child, shun the objects of the senses as poison and seek *forbearance*, sincerity, kindness, contentment and *truthfulness* as nectar.
3. You are neither earth, nor water, nor fire, not air, nor space. In order to attain liberation, know the Self as the witness of all these and as Consciousness itself.

Why does he bring in the elementals? Because the Hindu philosophy reduces gross and subtle worlds into the five elementals. Even mind and senses are non-Ātmā. Though sāttvic, they hold only a reflected ray.

4. If you *separate* yourself from the body *and mind* and rest in consciousness, you will at once be happy, peaceful and free from bondage.

Intelligence is not an apt translation of Cit. It is used generally to translate Mahātattva in the Sāṅkhya philosophy, being in the domain of Prakriti.

5. You do not belong to the Brāhmaṇa or any other caste or to any āshrama. You are not perceived by the senses *or the mind*. Unattached, formless and witness of the *world* are you. Be happy.

Even others form part of the world. Upon evidence only can you say that a thing exists. The world exists on account of you. You are the witness of the world. The world exists upon Consciousness. If you do not want the world, it does not exist. You can mar or make it.

6. Virtue and vice, pleasure and pain *pertain to the realm* of the mind,

not *to* you, Oh all-pervading one. You are neither doer nor enjoyer. Verily you are ever free.

Ordinarily, mind is necessary to enjoy or to do. So mind is all important in constituting doership. But you can be without mind. Then these two (doership and enjoyership) belong properly to the mind.

7. You are the one seer of all and really ever free. Verily this alone is your bondage that you see the seer as other than such.

You are the perceiver of your eyes' function, of your mind's subtle seeing. The real seer must never be thought to be doer.

8. Do you who have been bitten by the black serpent of egoism 'I am the doer', drink the nectar of the faith 'I am not the doer,' and be happy.

'I am not the doer.' This can be easily proven to all. You remain over to witness doership and enjoyership. Thus you are able to speak about it, to remember it. So you are no more than the Perceiver, even at the moment an action is done.

9. Burn down the forest of ignorance with the fire of conviction, 'I am the *Simple and* pure Consciousness', and be free from grief and be happy.

Eka means simple as opposed to compound. Ātmā is the only real element. Scientists will prove that all other so-called elements can be divided.

10. That Consciousness upon which this universe appears, *being conceived* like a snake in a rope, is Bliss – Supreme Bliss. You are *that Consciousness*. Be happy.

11. He who considers himself free is free indeed, and he who considers himself bound remains bound. 'As one thinks, so one becomes,' is a popular saying in this world, *which is only too* true.

There it is such a deep right thought. It becomes part of your being. So far your thoughts depended on the physical world which you have previously created by a stronger thought independent from your will. Act depends on prāṇa and it depends on subtle prāṇa whose embodiment is thought (proves the power of thought). Also gross or disturbed thought is less powerful than subtle or concentrated thought.

12. The Self is witness, pervading *your thoughts and feelings*, perfect,

One, free, Consciousness, actionless, unattached, desireless and quiet. Through illusion it appears as if of the world.

You are the witness, pervading your thoughts and feelings into which the world has been reduced. Don't look for the Ultimate principle out in the world. That is wrong.

13. Meditate on the Ātmā as *immovable*, Consciousness and non-dual, having given up external and internal self-modifications and the illusion 'I am the reflected self (individual *soul*).'

Kūṭastha is individual witness of body and mind. Brahmā is Īshvaric witness of cosmic mind.

14. Child, you have long been in the noose of *the feeling of your identity with a body*. Sever it with the sword of knowledge 'I am Consciousness,' and be happy.

15. You are unattached, actionless, self-effulgent and *nothing can leave any impression on you*. This indeed is your bondage that you practice *samādhi*.

What does self-effulgent mean? Look at a chair. Consciousness must come into the make of it, otherwise it cannot exist. Chair manifests itself before Consciousness. In the case of Consciousness, before what is it manifested? Before itself. It is impossible. So I am the only witness of myself. I know I. No other principle comes in. This is self-knowledge.

16. You pervade this universe *of your thoughts and feelings* and this universe exists in you. You are really pure Consciousness by nature. Do not be small minded.

You are Consciousness pervading thoughts and feelings which come and go upon Consciousness.

17. You are unconditioned, immutable, formless, *perfectly serene, unimpassioned*, of unfathomable intelligence and unperturbed. Desire for *Cit* alone. *Let all your vāsanās be of Cit*.

18. Know that which has form to be unreal, and the formless to be *changeless*. Through this spiritual instruction you will escape the possibility of rebirth.

19. Just as a mirror exists within and without the image reflected in it, even so the Supreme *Lord* exists inside and outside this body.

You might ask, ‘How can I meditate on the heart since you told me that body and world are unreal?’ You meditate on what is in the heart – meditate on the mirror. Something concrete is necessary for you to meditate or concentrate upon.

20. As the same all-pervading space is inside and outside a jar, *even* so the eternal all-pervasive Brahman exists in all things.

This chapter is only meant for ordinary persons or for a disciple on the path. Later on, the verses deal with realized men. It will be a mistake to apply them to bring them down for the use of ordinary persons. No ignorant person gets liberation by action in the form of exercises. You must have knowledge first, but don’t think that no sādhana is necessary.

2. *The disciple's joy at Self-realization*

Janaka said:

1. Oh, I am *that upon which nothing can leave any mark (niranjana)*, tranquil, pure Consciousness and beyond nature. All this time I have been duped by illusion.
2. As I alone *manifest or am the knower of* this body, even so do I *manifest or know* this universe. Therefore mine is all this universe, or verily nothing is mine.

It is wrong to separate the body from the rest. Body and world come to existence together as one indivisible whole. You see it when you come out of the deep sleep state. You can call every object 'seen' or 'manifestation'. Who is the seer? I. Either nothing or all is yours. 'Reveal' is not opposed to the thing which might exist before revelation, so it is wrong. It is manifest.

3. Oh, having *rejected* the universe along with the body, I *am* now *perceiving* the Supreme Self through *a mysterious force (received from my Guru)*.

Teaching of Guru remains even when the mind is gone.

4. As waves, foam and bubbles are not different from water, *even* so the universe emanating from the Self is not different from it.

If you begin to limit the real Self with time and space, it becomes body and mind. Where does time and space come from? From body and mind. Analyse the (chair) contents: it is only the container, i.e. space. When you analyse the latter it vanishes. Container cannot exist as such, once the content is gone. Space goes into time. Content vanishes in thought. But time goes into the make of thoughts. Thought is container of time. Later you see that time is nothing but Consciousness seen from the spiritual centre.

5. As cloth when analysed is found to be nothing but thread, *even* so this universe, *duly considered*, is nothing but Self.
6. Just as sugar generated in sugar-cane juice is wholly pervaded by it

(juice), *even* so the universe produced in me is permeated by me through and through.

7. The world appears from the ignorance of the Self and disappears with the knowledge of the Self, *even* as the snake appears from the non-cognition of the rope and disappears with its recognition.

This is the truth. But for a sādḥaka it has to be modified. You might feel: 'He who has reached the goal, does he not see the world?' If the sage says so, then he has a function in this world. Then the snake is there. The highest truth is made worldly. Better say: the world may well be seen as the Reality itself and at the same time its unreality, like knowing and seeing a mirage, which is as good as non-existent. The sage sees more intensely.

8. Light is my very nature *and* I am no other than that. When the universe *shines I am there in the shining*.

This verse is not to be understood in the pure highest advaitic meaning: that there is only Consciousness going into the make of all. See the light in every perception. Unless the perception of 'any blessed individual' rises, there is no light. So not only Christ can say, 'I am the light of the world.' There would be no Christ without my own light. Perception is the light.

9. Oh, the universe appears in *the being* conceived through *wrong knowledge*, *even* as silver appears in the mother of pearl, snake in the rope and water in the sunbeam.

10. Just as a jug dissolves into *earth*, a wave into water or a bracelet into gold, *even* so the universe which has emanated from me will dissolve into me.

At every moment of my life, the world emanates and vanishes into me. The chair is rising and subsiding as your world. Then Ella comes, and goes as soon as I deal with something else. It dissolves into that whence it came. You would have to concentrate on the whole world, which is impossible. So you create and dissolve the whole world at every moment, not at the end of a yuga.

11. *Behold me!* Adoration to *me* who know no decay and survive even the destruction of the world, from Brahmā down to a clump of grass.

12. *Behold me!* Adoration to *me* who, though with a body am *simple* (*in-*

divisible), who neither go anywhere nor come from anywhere but abide pervading the universe.

The universe is produced in your thoughts and feelings. Avoid seeing something outside which will establish your identity with the body.

13. *Behold me!* Adoration to *me*. There is none so *skilful* as I, who am bearing the universe for *long* without touching it with the body.

Of course the body is part of the universe.

14. *Behold me!* Adoration to *me* who have nothing or *have* all that is thought and spoken of.

15. Knowledge, knower and knowable – these three do not in reality exist. I am that Self *upon whom nothing can leave a mark, that* in which this triad appears through ignorance.

Also you can say that ignorance does not exist. When your mind is at something, the other thing cannot be there. It is only in a second thought that you can say the other thing was ignored. You need not posit ignorance anywhere. Why do you posit what you cannot see anywhere? It is a second thought that sees the rope in the snake. There is only snake or only rope. That is knowledge. Thus I ask you to see.

We discuss things without ever mentioning ignorance. Ignorance is supported by Consciousness. So why not go directly to Consciousness? Why think that once the object is removed, what will remain is nothingness? Something positive remains. That is Consciousness.

16. Oh, duality is the root of misery. There is no other remedy for it. All objects of experience are *false*. I am *one and* pure Consciousness and Bliss.

17. I am pure Consciousness. Through *wrong knowledge* I have imposed *limitation* (upon myself). Constantly reflecting in this way, I am abiding in the Absolute.

Only from one level there appears to be ignorance. But looked at from high up there is no ignorance. All perceptions of ours are seen through ignorance, which appears as the mother of all our mistakes. When you say ‘I see ignorance’, you connect the Self with ignorance which is not seen, once in the ‘I’.

18. I have neither bondage nor freedom. The illusion having lost its support has ceased. Oh, the universe, though existing in me, does not in reality so exist.

The support was the false ego.

19. I have known for certain that the body and the universe *have no existence* and that the Self is *only* pure Consciousness. So *where is the scope for* imagination?

20. Body, heaven and hell, bondage and freedom, as also fear, all these are mere imagination. What have I to do with all these – whose nature is *Cit*?

21. Oh, I do not find any duality. Even the multitude of human beings, therefore, has become like a wilderness. What should I attach myself to?

22. Neither am I this body, nor *am I embodied*. I am not *jīva*, I am *Cit*. This indeed was my bondage that I had thirst for life.

23. Oh, in me, the limitless ocean, diverse waves of worlds are produced forthwith, on the rising of the wind of the mind.

24. With the calming of the wind of the mind in the infinite ocean of myself, the ark of the universe *of jīva*, the trader, unfortunately meets destruction.

25. How wonderful! In me, the shoreless ocean, the waves of individual selves, according to their nature, rise, strike each other, play for a time, and disappear.

3. *Test of the disciple's Self-realisation*

Ashtāvakra said:

1. Having known yourself as really indestructible and one, how is it that you, serene and knower of the Self, feel attached to the acquisition of wealth?
2. Alas, as greed arises from the illusion of silver caused by the ignorance of mother of pearl, even so arises attachment to the objects of illusory perception from the ignorance of the Self.
3. Having known yourself to be that in which the universe appears like waves on the sea, why do you run about like a miserable being?
4. *Even* after hearing oneself to be pure Consciousness and surpassingly beautiful, how can one be attached to lust and thus become *unclean*?
5. It is strange that the sense of ownership should continue in the *Sage* who has realized the Self in all and all in the Self.
6. Strange that abiding in the supreme non-duality and intent on liberation, one should yet be subject to lust and *be unsettled* by the practice of amorous pastimes!
7. It is strange that knowing lust to be an enemy of knowledge, *one* who has grown extremely weak and reached his last days, should yet be eager for sensual enjoyment.
8. It is strange that one who is unattached to the objects of this world and the next, who discriminates the eternal from the transient, and who longs for emancipation, should *fear emancipation itself*.
9. *But* feted and feasted or tormented, the *Sage* ever sees the absolute Self and is thus neither gratified nor angry.
10. The high-souled person witnesses his own body acting as if it were another's. As such, how can he be disturbed by praise or blame?

In this 'another' it is supposed that you have absolutely no interest like an unknown man at the antipodes.

11. Realizing this universe as mere illusion and losing all interest therein, how can one of steady mind fear *even* the approach of death?
12. With whom can we compare that great-souled one who is content with *the knowledge of Self, who has no desire even for desirelessness*.
13. *He who by nature knows that the object is nothing, why should he consider this fit to be accepted and that fit to be rejected.*
14. He who has given up worldly attachment from his mind, who is beyond the pairs of opposites, and who is free from desire – to him *any enjoyment* coming as a matter of course *does not cause* either pleasure or pain.

A ruling prince in a palanquin carried by seven men only enquires at a certain place if a man is available – he happened to have been sent away by his brothers as a good-for-nothing. He is not used to walk in time, hurts his foot, forces the procession to go slowly. Every time he trips over, he is beaten.

Once the prince, angry, kicks him, and feels a burning sensation right through. The palace is reached; the prince relates the thing to the queen. ‘He must be a great man,’ says she. ‘Get hold of him.’ But he acts the part of an idiot.

The queen comes out using the nominative of address used for a great man. He is brought to his own state by what came out of her with the words. He blessed the prince.

There is nothing to distinguish great men. Story of Uppu Svāmi of Quilon, carrying bags of salt. But beaten once while found naked, the stroke was marked on the back of the man’s wife. But from thereon the Svāmi disappeared.

4. *Glorification of Self-realization*

Janaka said:

1. Oh, the man of understanding, the knower of the self, who plays the game of life has no similarity to the deluded *hearts* of the world.
2. Oh, the *sage* does not feel elated abiding in that state which Indra and all other gods *being unhappy hanker after*.
3. The heart of one who has known *that*, is not *surely* touched by virtue and vice, just as the sky is not touched by smoke, even though it appears to be.
4. Who can *prohibit* that great-souled one, who has known this entire universe to be the self alone, from *living as he pleases*.
5. Of the four kinds of created beings, from Brahmā down to a clump of grass, it is the wise one alone who is capable of renouncing desire and *desirelessness*.
6. Rare is the one who knows the self as one without a second, as well as the lord of the universe. He does what he *thinks* and has no fear from any quarter.

5. *Four ways of Self-realization*

Ashṭāvakra said:

1. You are *not attached to* anything whatsoever. Therefore, pure as you are, why do you want to renounce? *Dissolve this complex and even thus* enter into (the state of) Dissolution.

Dissolve the body and mind into your self to live unattached to this world.

2. The universe rises from you like bubbles rising from the sea. Thus know the *Ātmā* to be one and enter *even thus* into (the state of) Dissolution.

Find that the world is really appearing in you. The bubbles take their matter from the sea. The world comes from your *Ātmā*. Here the world is taken as real in essence.

3. The universe being manifested like the snake in the rope, does not exist in you who are pure, even though it is present to the senses; because it is unreal. *Thus verily do you* enter into (the state of) Dissolution.

See the world as unreal.

4. *Perfect, you are alike (same or equal)* in misery and happiness, *desire and desirelessness*, life and death. Therefore *even thus do you attain* (the state of) Dissolution.

You do not transform happiness and misery into something else. They remain what they are. They are suffered as such, but they make no change in the background, they leave no mark. Take out your mental modes and be alike.

6. *The Higher Knowledge*

Janaka said:

1. Boundless as space am I. The phenomenal world is like a jar. This is knowledge. So it has neither to be renounced nor accepted, nor destroyed.
2. *That* I am, like the ocean; and the *phenomenal* universe is like *a* wave. This is knowledge. So it has neither to be renounced nor accepted, nor destroyed.
3. *That* I am, like mother of pearl; and the *world projection* is like silver. This is knowledge. So it has neither to be renounced nor accepted, nor destroyed.
4. I am indeed in all beings and all beings are in me. This is knowledge. So it has neither to be renounced nor accepted, nor destroyed.

In this chapter, different illustrations are taken (jar, sea) in which the connection between Ātmā and world is closer. In the silver of the mother of pearl (all is illusion) and all are in me, I am in all.

7. *The Disciple's Realization*

Janaka said:

1. In me the boundless ocean, the ark of the universe moves hither and thither, impelled by the wind of *the mind (thought)*. I am not *affected*.

Here, no relationship between world and myself, except that it moves about on me. So where does this ark come from?

2. In me, the limitless ocean, let the wave of the world rise or vanish of itself. I neither increase nor decrease thereby.

In the second centre, this world is nothing else but myself; relationship is established.

3. In me, the boundless ocean, *there is but the name* of the universe. I am *highly* tranquil and formless. In this alone do I abide.

Here the third centre. Even the forms do not exist. Only name is put on me to differentiate foam from water by name. Otherwise you would see no difference.

4. The self is not in the object, nor is the object in *that* which is infinite and *upon which no mark is left*. Thus it is free from attachment and desire, and is tranquil. In this alone do I abide.

Here is a higher centre. The objects as such do not exist. Then nothing can be contained or container. There is only the Ātmā.

5. Oh, I am really consciousness itself. The world is like a juggler's show. So how and where can there be any thought of rejection and acceptance in me.

The translation loses what is essential. The spirit is lost. But the idea is there. If you read it in the original, it will be conveyed to you.

By all means applaud the show, but don't forget the background. Remember it is a show. (As soon as you hear that your mother is dying, you forget the show.)

From the juggler's show you never want to take something home with you. Don't appropriate part of it. Your body and thoughts are parts of it.

8. *Bondage and Liberation*

(*Lower level*)

Ashtāvakra said:

1. It is bondage when the mind desires or grieves at anything, rejects or accepts anything, feels happy or angry at anything.
2. Liberation is attained when the mind does not desire or grieve or reject or accept or feel happy or angry.
3. It is bondage when the mind is attached to any *particular sense organ*. It is liberation when the mind is *not attached to any of the sense organs*. (This is not of interest.)
4. When there is no 'I', there is liberation; when there is 'I', there is bondage. Considering *this*, easily refrain from accepting or rejecting anything.

'I' not distinguished from world.

9. Detachment

(Lower plane)

Ashtāvakra said:

1. Duties done and not done, as well as *all* pairs of opposites. When do they cease and for whom? Knowing thus, be intent on renunciation, and be desireless through complete indifference to the world.
2. Rare indeed, my child, is that blessed person in whom desire for life, enjoyment and learning *has become* extinguished by observing the ways of men.
3. A wise man becomes *quiet* by realizing that all this is vitiated by the threefold misery, and is transient, unsubstantial, contemptible and *worthy to* be rejected.
4. What is that time or that age in which the pairs of opposites do not exist for men? One who quitting *these*, is content with what comes of itself, attains perfection.
5. What man is there, who having observed the diversity of opinions among the great seers, saints and yogis, and become completely indifferent (to learning), does not attain quietude?

When you notice that their ceaseless discussions are useless, you get the right sort of peace. You get what you really want.

6. He who *having gained a true* knowledge of *Cit* takes others beyond *samsāra* by means of an attitude of indifference to the world, equanimity and sound logic; is he not really a spiritual guide?

Here you see what a Guru teaches. In Jnyāna-vāsishṭha, it is otherwise described. ‘He who by darshana, touch and word creates in the disciple’s mind what will take him ultimately to the goal. He is the Guru.’

7. Look upon the modifications of the elements as nothing in reality but the primary elements themselves, and you will at once be free from bondage and abide in your true self.

8. Desires alone are the *samsāra*. Do you, therefore, renounce all *those*. *The renunciation of that (i.e. the world) follows the renunciation of tendencies*. Now you may live *in whatever manner you like*.

10. Quietude

Ashṭāvakra said:

1. Be indifferent to everything, having given up *kāma* (desire) the enemy, *artha* (worldly prosperity) which is attended with mischief, *as well as* *dharma* (good works) which is the cause of these two.
2. Look upon friends, lands, wealth, houses, wives, blood relations and such other good fortunes as a dream or a juggler's show, lasting three or five days.
3. Know that wherever there is desire, there is world. Betaking yourself to firm non-attachment, go beyond desire and be happy.
4. Bondage consists only in desire and *its* destruction is said to be liberation. By non-attachment to the world *alone* is attained constant joy of the realization (of the self).
5. You are *indivisible, pure consciousness*. The universe is *dead matter* and unreal. *There is not even* ignorance. Yet what desire to know can *there be for you? Therefore what is the meaning of your craving for knowledge?*

Here the universe as perceived by me is dead matter. What is seeable is dead matter. Thought as such, world as such is dead. But also you can see that the whole of thought and world is nothing other than consciousness.

6. Kingdom, sons, wives, bodies and pleasures have been lost to you, birth after birth, even though you were attached to them.
7. Enough of prosperity, *desire* and *virtuous action*. The mind did not find repose in these in the dreary forest of the world.
8. For how many *lives* have you not done hard and painful work, with *your* body, mind and speech! Therefore cease today *itself*.

Work is always painful. To come to peace you work, but it will not give you peace. This is not the right way to find the right means.

11. Wisdom

Ashṭāvakra said:

1. One who has realized that *existence, destruction and change are in the nature of things*, easily finds repose, being unperturbed and free from pain.
2. *Knowing for certain that Īshvara, the creator of all, is none other than you, give up all your desires, become peaceful and free from pain.*
3. *Knowing for certain that adversity and prosperity come in (their own) time through fate, one is ever contented, has all his senses in control and does not desire or grieve.*
4. *Knowing for certain that happiness and misery, birth and death are due to one's fate, one comes to see that it is not possible to accomplish the desired things, and thus becomes inactive and is not attached even though engaged in action.*
5. One who has realized that *thought alone* breeds misery in this world and nothing else, becomes free from it, and is happy, peaceful and rid of desires everywhere.
6. 'I am not the body, nor is the body mine. I am pure consciousness itself.' *One who has realized this for certain, does not remember what he has done or not done: he has become free.*
7. 'It is verily I from Brahmā down to the clump of grass.' *One who knows this for certain, becomes free from the conflict of thought, pure and peaceful and turns away from what is attained and not attained.*
8. *One who knows for certain that this manifold and wonderful universe is nothing, becomes desireless and pure consciousness, and finds peace as if nothing exists.*

12. The Disciple's Realization

Janaka said:

1. First I become intolerant of physical action, then of extensive speech and then of thought. Thus *verily* do I *therefore* abide.
2. *I have* no attachment for *objects of perception etc.*; and the self not being an object of perception, *I have* my mind *free from both* distraction and *one-pointedness*. (*It is one with the absolute.*) *Even thus* do I abide.
3. Effort *is* made for concentration when there is distraction of mind owing to superimposition etc. Seeing this to be the rule, thus *verily* do I abide.
4. *Being devoid of the sense of the rejectable and the acceptable*, and having *no joy and sorrow*, thus, *Oh Brahman*, do I abide *today*. (*Yogic.*)
5. A stage of life or no stage of life, meditation, *renunciation of the objects of the mind*, finding *them causing* distraction to me, thus *verily* do I abide.
6. *The cessation* from action is as much an outcome of ignorance as the performance *thereof*. Knowing this truth fully well, thus *verily* do I abide.

This is possible by ceasing to identify yourself with the organs of action. Be the seer of actions and inactions. You cannot be said to be active or inactive.

7. Thinking on the unthinkable one, one betakes oneself only to a form of thought. Therefore giving up that thought, thus *verily* do I abide.

This is to discourage the meditation where you give form to the ultimate, so as to meditate on it objectively.

Here is meant the objective meditation of the yogi, posited outside oneself. Otherwise this verse would contradict the rest of the book and especially the first chapter saying the self is witness, rest in Cit, be the seer, be convinced you are pure Cit, meditate on the Ātmā, desire for Cit alone.

The Jnyāni's meditation does not deal with the pair: 'unthinkable,

thinkable'. It deals with experience, with the changeless in us, with the 'I' most known though unknowable. This changeless is the support of the mind. Mind is bound to be changeful. Viveka-vritti is not of the mind. It is the changeless, it takes you to the changeless. If you maintain that viveka-vritti is part of the mind, I will not object, but say: 'That part of the mind which is changeless, I call Ātmā.'

8. Blessed is the man who has accomplished this – blessed is he who is such by nature.

13. Happiness

Janaka said:

1. The tranquility *that springs in one who is without anything*, is rare even *when one possesses* but a loin cloth. Therefore, giving up renunciation and acceptance, I live happily.

Who does the act? Not I! I am the witness. Therefore as soon as renunciation or acceptance comes in, it is a function of ego. The verse tries to cut all superstructures of the ego, to reduce it little by little. But Gurunāthan does not attach much importance to that. He strikes at the root of the ‘tree’ of the ego. I have nothing to do with body-mind. There, the whole ego goes down with all its branches (of superimpositions: man plus fathership, plus officership, etc.)

Janaka has already risen to a very high level. It cannot be done at the start. Take the witness position – the only way for you to transcend ego, renunciation and acceptance.

2. There is trouble of the body *somewhere*, trouble of the tongue *somewhere*, trouble of the mind *somewhere*. Having renounced these, I live happily in life’s supreme goal.

Get aloof, cease identifying yourself with body-mind.

3. Thinking that nothing whatsoever is really done by the Self, I do whatever presents itself to be done and live happily.

Cease thinking that you are the doer, you are the seer.

4. The yogis who *have not gone beyond* body insist upon action or inaction. Owing to the absence of association or dissociation with anything I live happily.
5. No good or evil accrues to me by staying, going or sleeping. So I live happily whether I stay, go or sleep.
6. I do not lose by sleeping *or* gain by striving. So giving up (thoughts of) loss and elation, I live happily.

7. Observing again and again the *fluctuations* of pleasure *etc.* under different *conditions*, I have renounced good and evil and *am happy*.

Sometimes the same object gives you pleasure or pain.

14. Peace

Janaka said:

1. He verily has his recollections (of worldly life) exhausted who is by nature *without thoughts*, who thinks of *objects without any incentive* and who is, as it were, awake through sleep.
2. When my desire has melted away, where are my riches, where the friends, where the robbers in the *forms* of sense objects, where the scriptures and where *is the* knowledge?
3. As I have known the supreme self who is the witness and the Lord, and *have lost all desire for* liberation *from* bondage, *the thought of it never occurs to me*.
4. The different conditions of one who within is devoid of doubts, but without moves about at his own pleasure like a *mad man*, can only be understood by those like him.

This is only one kind of Jīvan-mukta.

15. Knowledge of the Self

Ashṭāvakra said:

1. A man of pure intellect *gains his end*, even when *Truth is told in its pure nakedness*. The other is bewildered *therein* even after enquiring throughout life.
2. *Distaste* for sense objects is liberation; love for sense objects is bondage. Such verily is knowledge. Now do as you please.

But you can love sense objects as the expression of the absolute. So then they do not tie you down.

3. This knowledge of the Truth makes an eloquent, wise and active person mute, inert and inactive. *Hence it is that* it is shunned by those who want to enjoy the world.

Worldly people seek limited joy. But the sage has unlimited joy! But what is supposed to be the inactivity of the sage is the highest activity. Eloquence is limited wisdom, and activity also. You oppose them to their contraries. But these contraries can also mean the unlimited eloquence, wisdom and activity. If you are eloquence itself, how can you compete with a lecturer?

Darkness may mean: (a) an absence of light or (b) extreme light. Ashṭāvakra himself is not mute or inactive. Unlimited eloquence cannot limit itself to a body. You have gone to that state, from where eloquence sprang. It is you, appearing as a wise man; you are wisdom itself. Consciousness is most active. It never rests.

4. You are not the body, nor is the body yours; *nor* are you the doer or the enjoyer. You are consciousness itself, the eternal witness and free. Go about happily.

Here he disposes of the body.

5. Attachment, *love* and abhorrence are attributes of mind. The mind is never yours. You are changeless *Consciousness itself*. Go about happily without thoughts.

Here he disposes of the mind.

6. Realizing the self in all and all in the self, free from '*I-ness*' and '*mine-ness*', be *you* happy.
7. Oh *Consciousness*, you indeed are that in which the universe *appears* like waves of the ocean. Be *you free from anxiety*.
8. *Listen child, listen* – never *be under any delusion* in this matter – you alone are that pure *Consciousness*, *Bhagavān* who is beyond all *Pra-kṛiti*.
9. The body, *which* is composed of the *three guṇas*, comes, stays and goes. The self neither comes nor goes. Why do you then *feel worried about* it?

What you are has been described in verses 1 to 8. Verse 9 deals with your body.

10. Let the body last to the end of the kalpa (cycle) or let it go even today. Where is there any increase or decrease in you, who are pure *Consciousness*?
11. Let the waves of the universe rise and fall *of their own accord*, in you who are the infinite ocean. That *does not add (to you)* or *take (from you)*.
12. Child, you are pure *Consciousness* itself. This universe is nothing different from you. Therefore *who* can have *any thought of acceptance or rejection and how*?
13. Where *is the scope for* birth, action and egoism *in that calm of* pure *Consciousness which is yourself: the one and the eternal*.

Another aspect of the world.

14. You alone appear *in* whatever you perceive. Do bracelets, armlets and anklets appear different from gold?
15. Completely give up such distinctions as '*I am that*' and '*I am not this*.' Consider all as the self and be desireless and happy.
16. *The world comes into being* through your ignorance. You are *the reality*. You alone are the *jīva (samsāri)*. You alone are the *non-jīva (asamsāri)*.
17. One who knows for certain that this universe is but an illusion and a

nothing becomes desireless and pure *consciousness*, and finds peace as if nothing exists.

18. In the ocean of the world, one only was, is and will be – you have neither bondage nor liberation. Live contented and happy.
19. Oh, pure Consciousness, do not disturb your mind with *yeah and nay*. Be calm and abide happily in your own self which is Bliss itself.
20. Completely give up even contemplation and hold nothing in your mind. You are verily the self *and therefore* free. What will you do by thinking?

This is said from a high level. You have established your centre through previous meditation. If you can have no thought in your mind, then only, give up contemplation. Don't take this instruction away from the context.

16. Special Instruction

Ashṭāvakra said:

1. Child, you may often speak upon various shāstras or hear them. *Still you* cannot be established in the self unless you forget all.

This means: change your mode of thinking. The knowledge acquired by the individual way of thinking has to go. Reform yourself. Become another, world does not exist independently. It is you who establish the chair or the man.

‘He whom Ātmā chooses only can realize.’ But it is only you who thirst for Ātmā, and only one with that thirst for Ātmā will profit by words, intellect and Vedas. It does not mean that sādhana is useless; otherwise you would be left without a means to realize Ātmā by experience.

2. Oh *sage*, you may enjoy, or work, or practice mental concentration. But your mind will still yearn for *that* which is beyond all objects and in which all desires are extinguished.
3. All *worldly persons are full of desires and* are unhappy, because they work. But none knows *Him* (Ātmā). The blessed one attains emancipation through this very instruction.

What for do you work? To obtain a momentary pleasure. So you have to work again. Such effort does not give you what you want. With effort you can never reach ‘It’. But remaining idle also you cannot reach it. Nevertheless it is a fact that effort because it is directed to the unlimited takes you beyond idleness and activity into the effortless, which then takes you to the unlimited.

4. Happiness belongs to that master idler to whom even the closing and opening of eyelids is an affliction, and to none else.

Means all manner or work is useless. Effortlessness takes you to the goal. The master idler is the man of self-realization who is beyond activity and inactivity – i.e. indifferent and unattached to work.

5. When the mind is free from such pairs of opposites as ‘*this is done*’

and ‘*this is not done*’, it becomes indifferent to *dharma*, worldly prosperity, sensual enjoyment and liberation.

6. *He is detached* who *hates* sense objects, *he is attached* who covets them. But he who does not accept or reject is neither *detached* nor attached.
7. As long as desire, which is the *abode* of the state of indiscrimination, continues, there will verily be the sense of attachment and aversion, which is the branch and *sprout* of the (tree of) samsāra.
8. Attachment *is the incentive to* activity, aversion *to* abstention. The man of wisdom is free from the pairs of opposites, like a child, and he lives on *verily as such*.
9. One who is attached to the world wants to renounce it in order to avoid sorrow. But one without attachment is free from sorrow and does not feel miserable even *there*.

Here is described only one aspect of the sage, as opposed to a worldly man. The sage is in samsāra – without being in it, since he does not suffer the fruits of it.

10. He who has an egoistic feeling even towards liberation, and considers even the body as his own, is neither a jnyāni nor a yogi. He only suffers misery.
11. Let even Hara, Hari, or the lotus-born Brahmā be your instructor, but unless you forget all, you cannot be established in the Self.

Change your vision, correct the fundamental error in you, where you identify yourself with your body.

17. The True Knower

Ashṭāvakra said:

1. He has gained the fruit of knowledge as well as of the practice of yoga who, contented and with purified senses, ever enjoys being alone.
2. Oh, the knower of truth is never miserable in this world, for the whole universe is filled by himself alone.
3. No sense objects ever please him who delights in self, even as the leaves of the neem tree do not please an elephant who delights in sallaki leaves.
4. Rare in the world is he whose *enjoyments leave no saṃskāra behind, and* who does not desire things which he has not *enjoyed*.

Here is a different type of sage who allows functions of enjoyment.

5. *One* desirous of worldly enjoyment and *one* desirous of liberation *are* both found in this world. But rare is the great-souled one who is not desirous of either enjoyment or liberation.

Why should you not want liberation? Because you have established your centre where you are not bound. Only the bound can want liberation. This man has not liberated himself. That is not realization. What he found out is that there is neither liberation nor bondage. This is from the highest level.

6. It is only some broad-minded person who has neither attraction for nor aversion to dharma, artha, kāma and moksha, as well as life and death.
7. The man of knowledge does not feel any desire for the dissolution of the universe, or aversion to its existence. The blessed one therefore lives happily on *whatever* comes as a matter of course.
8. Being *perfectly satisfied* by *this* knowledge and with his mind absorbed, and contented, the wise one lives happily, seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and eating.

Here also the sage goes on living normally.

9. There is no attachment or *non-attachment* in one for whom the ocean of *samsāra* has dried up. His look is vacant, *action* purposeless, and *the* senses inoperative.

Here is given another type of Jīvan-mukta in a kind of samādhi.

10. The wise one neither keeps awake nor sleeps, *neither* opens nor closes his eyes. Oh, the liberated soul anywhere enjoys the supreme condition.

The state of the liberated is beyond comprehension. This is no authority for not living normally. Here you have to refer to the ultimate with whom the Mukta has identified himself.

11. The liberated person is always found abiding in *self* and *pure* in heart, *and* he lives freed from all desires under all conditions.
12. Seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, taking, speaking and walking, the great-souled one free from all efforts and non-efforts is verily emancipated.
13. The liberated one neither slanders nor praises, *neither* rejoices nor is angry, neither gives nor takes. He is free from attachment to all objects.

Here the Jīvan-mukta is identified with the ultimate principle which has nothing to do with bodily activities.

14. The great-souled one is not perturbed and remains self-poised, *both* at the sight of a woman full of love *and* of approaching death. He is indeed liberated.
15. The *sage* who sees the same everywhere *makes* no difference between happiness and misery, man and woman, and prosperity and adversity.

Always in reference to the ultimate principle, it cannot be dragged down to the world level.

16. In the wise one whose worldly life is exhausted and who *is no longer a man*, there is neither any desire to harm nor compassion, neither insolence nor humility, neither wonder nor mental disturbance.

‘He’ (the wise one) is not doing. Simply, a body-mind is doing certain things, but there is no ‘He’.

17. The liberated one neither abhors the objects of the senses nor *craves* them. Ever with a detached mind he *enjoys* the attained (?)as well as the unattained.

He does not enjoy the unattained. This is a mistake in the original – perhaps the printer’s putting *prāpti* for *prāptam* in the last line.

[The surmise in this note was evidently correct. The fourth edition, 1975, has a double occurrence of ‘*prāptam*’ in the last line, and no occurrence of ‘*prāpti*’. Accordingly, the second sentence of the translation is amended to: ‘Ever with a detached mind he experiences them as they come.’]

18. The *sage* of vacant mind knows not the conflict of contemplation and non-contemplation, good and evil. He abides as it were in the state of absoluteness.

When left to itself the mind has no thought, which is impossible to an ordinary man who either thinks or sleeps.

19. Devoid of the feeling of ‘*mineness*’ and ‘“*I*”-ness’, knowing for certain that nothing is, and with all his desires set at rest *within*, the man of knowledge does not act, though he may be acting.
20. An indescribable state is attained by the *sage* whose mind has melted away and who is free *from the display of the mind, and* from delusion, dream and dullness.

Describes the type of Mukta where mind is absorbed, not the one who goes on using his mind as usual.

18. Peace

Ashṭāvakra said:

1. Salutation to that which is bliss itself by nature, calmness, and effulgence, with the dawning of the knowledge of which all delusion becomes like a dream.
2. One gets *abundant* enjoyments by acquiring *all* worldly objects. Surely one cannot be happy without renouncing all.

In former chapters he described two ways for going beyond renunciation, either withdrawing from sense objects (not very effective) or by seeking pleasure thinking it is in objects. But the happiness is not in them at all times. Neither is it in your mind, since you are seeking objects from birth to death. Happiness comes in when mind meets objects.

Where does happiness come from? While you desire, the mind is restless. When an object is attained the mind comes to rest, and that ultimate principle standing behind comes to shine for a short time.

But since you always look outwardly for the cause of joy, you think happiness came from the object attained. Even in the absence of objects, as in the deep sleep state, the joy comes in. When you enjoy, you forget the object.

3. How can one whose heart's core has been scorched by the heat of the sorrow of sin arising from duty, enjoy happiness without the continuous shower of the ambrosia of tranquility.

How can you be happy unless the mind is tranquil, devoid of sense of duty?

4. This universe is but a state of consciousness. In reality it is nothing. *Those self-existing beings that cognize both existence and non-existence never cease to be.*
5. The *nature of the self* which is absolute, effortless, immutable and spotless is verily neither far away nor near. It is *always* attained.
6. *No sooner is the self apprehended, on the cessation of illusion, than they with their vision unobstructed, live with their sorrows dispelled.*

7. Knowing all as mere *idea* and the self as free and eternal, *why should the wise one undergo a course of training?*

Here Ashtāvakra wants you to have jnyāna, and he discards effort.

8. Knowing for certain that one's self is Brahman and that existence and non-existence are figments, what should one who is free from desire, know, say or do?
9. Such thoughts as 'this indeed am I' and 'this I am not' are annihilated for the yogi, who has become silent, by knowing for certain all as *self*.
10. The yogi who attained tranquility has no distraction, no concentration, no *excess of* knowledge, no ignorance, *no* pleasure *nor* pain.
11. *The dominion of* heaven or *mendicancy*, gain or loss, society or solitude, *make* no difference to the yogi *whose nature is free from conditions*.
12. Dharma (ritualistic or meritorious *works*), artha (worldly prosperity), kāma (sense *enjoyments*) or discrimination *has no* significance for the yogi, who has transcended such dual notions as 'this is *done*' and 'this is not *done*'.
13. The yogi who is liberated while living has neither any duty nor any attachment at heart. His actions *in this world* pertain only to life.

He also has said that such a yogi never acts, from a higher centre. Coming down to the plane where a worldly man sees a sage, Ashtāvakra makes him see that the sage takes to any kind of life that turns up, whereas the ordinary man insists upon having a particular life.

14. Where is delusion, where is the universe, where is meditation of that, or where is liberation for the great-souled one who (*is* beyond the world of desires), *has gone beyond the limit of ideation?*
15. He who sees the universe, *let him* try to deny it. *He who has no samskāra, even though he sees, he does not see. So why should he try to disprove it?*
16. He who has seen the supreme Brahman, *let him meditate*, 'I am Brahman'. What *would* he who has transcended all thought, think when he sees no second?

17. He indeed *has to control* himself, who sees distraction in himself. But the great one is not distracted. Having nothing to accomplish, what *would* he do?
18. The man of knowledge, though living like *a common* man, *has* neither concentration, *nor* distraction, *or any impression* of his own.
19. He who is *devoid of* existence and non-existence, who is wise, satisfied, and free from desire, *has nothing to do*, even if he may be acting in the eyes of the world.
20. The wise one who lives on happily, doing what comes to him to be done, *has no obstinate vision* either in activity or in inactivity.
21. Blown by the wind of the samskāras, the desireless, independent, free and liberated person moves about like a dry leaf.

Not only the body is meant, but the mind also.

22. There is no joy or sorrow for one who has transcended worldly existence. Ever with a serene mind, he lives like one without a body.
23. The wise one whose delight is in *self* and whose mind is calm and pure, has no desire *for renouncing* whatsoever, nor *any desire to accept*.
24. Naturally of a vacant mind and *acting spontaneously*, the wise one is not affected by honour or dishonour *like* an ordinary man.
25. One who acts in conformity with such thoughts as ‘this is done by the body and not by me, the pure self’, such a one, even though acting, does not act.

Here is another Mukta who has a mind, but he is established.

26. The Jīvan-mukta acts like one who cannot remember; he is acting so, but he is not therefore a fool. Even though in the world, he *looks* happy and blessed.
27. The wise one who, weary of diverse reasonings, has attained repose, neither thinks nor knows nor hears nor sees.
28. *Being beyond samādhi and* distraction, *the son of tranquility* is neither an aspirant for liberation nor *the reverse*. Having *ascertained* the universe to be a figment, even though he sees it, he exists as Brahman itself.

29. He who has egoism in him acts *or does not act*. The wise one who is free from egoism, *has neither action or inaction*.

This verse apparently contradicts verse 49 (infra) (page 181). But it really means: the sage is beyond action and inaction, and beyond all pairs of opposites. It cannot mean that he does anything. The sage really cannot do wrong, being free from egoism and active above the moral level.

30. The mind of the liberated one is neither troubled nor pleased; it is *inactive, static*, desireless, and free from doubts.
31. The mind of the liberated one does not exert itself to be either meditative or active; but it becomes meditative and active without any motive.
32. A dull-witted person becomes bewildered on hearing the real Truth, *or* some sharp-witted man withdraws *into* himself like a dull person.
33. The ignorant constantly *take to the practice of* concentration and control of the mind. The wise abiding in *their* real self, like persons in sleep, do not find anything to be done.
34. The ignorant person does not attain peace either by inaction or by action. The wise one becomes happy merely by *ascertaining* the Truth.
35. In this world, *men through taking* to diverse practices *cannot* know the Self, which is pure, intelligent, beloved, perfect, beyond the universe, and free from any taint.
36. *An* ignorant person does not attain liberation through *action, by way of* repeated practice. The blessed one through mere knowledge, *stands* free, *devoid of all activities*.
37. The ignorant person does not attain to Brahman, for he desires to become it. The wise one *surely* realizes the nature of the supreme Brahman even without desiring *it*.

But you have to become desireless though effort first. Then only effortlessly will you progress. You cannot become, it is a wrong idea. You *are* it already. But you may desire to Be.

38. *Wanting* support and eager for the attainment (of freedom), the ignorant only keep up the *samsāra*. The wise *knows this and cuts* at the root of the *samsāra*, which is the source of all misery.

The sense of there being no support is the cause of samsāra.

39. The fool desires peace *as though it has to be gained*, and so does not attain it. The wise one knows the Truth and is ever of tranquil mind.

If peace is something to be attained, it can be lost also. The fool desires peace as though it has to be gained.

40. Where is self-knowledge for him whose knowledge depends on the object? The wise do not see this and that, but see the immutable self.

41. Where is control (of mind) for the deluded *who* strives for it? It is indeed always natural with the wise one who delights in *self*.

The striving goes on and is in conflict with the control.

42. Some think that *objective world, phenomenal* existence is, and *some* that nothing is. Rare is the one who thinks neither and is thus calm.

Who is beyond 'to be or not to be'?

43. Men of *poor* intellect *objectify* the Ātmā as pure and One without a second, *do* not know it through delusion and are unhappy as long as they live.

Ātmā is the real subject, and can never be objectified. Merge into the subject. It does not mean that you must not think about the Ātmā.

44. The buddhi (mind) of one who longs for liberation is *never thrown without a support*. But the buddhi of the liberated one is indeed ever *self-dependent* and free from desire.

If you have thought there will be an object; but the liberated can remain without any object.

45. Seeing *the tigers of* sense objects, the frightened ones, seeking refuge, at once enter *the* cave for the attainment of control and concentration.

We go straight at the tiger and analyse it.

46. Seeing the lion *devoid of vāsanās*, *the* elephants *of* sense objects quietly take to their heels, *and when* unable to *escape*, serve him like flatterers.

Desires come out of vāsanās.

47. He who is free from doubts and has his mind *absorbed (in the Self)*

- does not resort to *the study of shāstras*. Seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and eating, he lives happily.
48. *He whose intellect is sharp, discriminating and subtle becomes happy* by the mere hearing of the *Truth*, does not see *propriety or impropriety of conduct or indifference to either*.
49. The *straightforward person* does whatever comes to be done, whether *productive of good or evil*; for his actions are like those of a child.
50. *Freedom begets happiness*, through freedom to the *supreme*, through freedom to tranquility, and through freedom to the *highest* state.
51. When a man *thinks* that he himself is neither the doer nor the enjoyer, all *his thoughts become* destroyed.

The one thought is going to destroy all the others until it dies itself. It was really not a thought. It has no object. It denotes the subject. It is the viveka-vritti.

52. The conduct of the wise one, *though unrestricted and natural*, shines; but not the affected calmness of the *fool* whose mind is attached.
53. The wise who are free from imaginings, unbound and of unfettered intellect, (sometimes) *appear* in enjoyments and sometimes retire into the mountain caves.

He [the sage] is never the ego you take him to be.

54. No *mark whatever is left, on the mind-stuff* of the wise one on seeing or honouring a man versed in sacred learning, a god, a holy place, a woman, a king or a beloved one.
55. The yogi is not at all *affected* even when ridiculed and despised by his servants, sons, wives, daughter's sons, and *relations*.
56. Though pleased, he is not pleased; though pained, he does not suffer any pain. Only those like him understand his wonderful state.

If the mind is pleased, I am not the mind, hence not pleased. But even in the actual level, consciousness which I am, cannot be limited by pleasure and non-pleasure; and hence whether it appears as one or the other it is equilateral. Whatever the sage does or does not, it is all the same, because for him there is only consciousness.

57. The sense of duty indeed is *samsāra*. It is transcended by the *wise*

who are of the form of the void, formless, immutable and without any trace of misery.

58. *The ignorant*, even without doing anything, is ever agitated by *the restlessness of the mind*; but the *sage*, even though doing his duties is *perfectly tranquil*.
59. *Perfectly tranquil* in practical life *as well*, the wise one sits happily, sleeps happily, moves happily, speaks happily and eats happily.
60. *He who* even in practical life does not, *owing to his self-possession*, feel distressed like ordinary people, remains unagitated like *deep waters*, with all his sorrows gone.
61. Even *the inaction of the ignorant* becomes action, and even *the action of the wise is equal to inaction*.
62. *The ignorant may show aversion to possession. He* whose love for the body has vanished, *has neither attachment nor non-attachment*.

It is through body that you become attached. It is the ignorant one who has the sense of possession, that has to renounce his possession.

63. The consciousness of the *ignorant* is always attached to thinking *what ought to be thought (Ātmā)* is of the nature of *stillness (having no object)*.

It was said Ātmā is unthinkable, but here it means: The thought, if it forgets its source, is lost into objects. So don't forget the source. Thoughtlessness is the form of 'thought' the wise one has. It may appear as unconsciousness.

64. The *sage* – who moves like a child *without motive* in all his *observances* and is pure – has *no mark left on him by what is done by him*.
65. Blessed indeed is the knower of the self, who even though seeing, hearing, touching, smelling or eating *is free from interest and* is the same *in* all conditions.
66. Where is [*ābhāsa = appearance?*], where is *samsāra*, where is the end and where *is the means for it*, for the wise one, who is ever changeless like *space*.
67. Glorious is he who is free from all desires *and* is the embodiment of

infinite bliss, which is his own nature. He who has attained natural and unconditioned samādhi.

68. In short, the great-souled *man* who has realized the Truth, is free from the desire *of* enjoyment and liberation, and is devoid of all attachment, at all times and in all places.
69. What remains to be done by one who is pure consciousness? *One who* has renounced *the* phenomenal existence *beginning* with Mahat, *which* is manifested through mere name (*Sāṅkhya Vedānta*).
70. The pure one *who has known* for certain that *all* this is the product of illusion and nothing exists, *to whom the inexpressible is expressed*, naturally enjoys peace.
71. Rule of conduct, dispassion, renunciation and restraint of the senses? What are *they* to one *who* does not perceive any objective reality?
72. Where is bondage or liberation, joy or sorrow for one who shines as the infinite and does not perceive *the* relative existence?
73. *In saṃsāra, existing only until you know it, māyā* prevails. The wise one lives without the feeling of ‘I-ness’, ‘mineness’ and attachment.

It is only when you are not prepared to look at it that saṃsāra exists.
74. To the *sage* who perceives the self as imperishable and *sorrowless*, *what* is knowledge, *what* is the universe, *or what* are the *feelings* of ‘I am the body’ *and* ‘the body is mine’?
75. No sooner the ignorant man gives up *the* practices of mind control *etc.*, *then* he becomes a prey to desires and fancies.
76. The man of dull intellect, even hearing the Truth, does not give up his delusion. Though appearing devoid of mental activity through *effort*, *he has* a craving for sense objects *lurking* within.
77. He whose work has *dropped* with the dawn of knowledge, does not find *any* opportunity to do or say anything, even *if* he *be* doing work *in the eyes of the* people.
78. For the wise one who is ever immutable and fearless, there is *no* darkness, *no* light, *no relinquishment*, nothing whatsoever.
79. *What* is steadiness, *what* is discrimination, *or what* is fearlessness *to* the yogi who is impersonal and of indescribable nature?

80. There is no heaven, *no* hell, *not* even liberation in life. In short nothing exists in yogic consciousness.

Yoga is used in jnyāna, bhakti, etc.

81. The wise one neither longs for gain nor grieves at non-attainment. His cool mind is verily filled with nectar.

82. The desireless one praises *not the gentle* nor blames even the wicked. Contented, and the same in happiness and misery, he finds nothing to be done.

83. The wise one neither abhors *samsāra*, nor wishes to perceive the self. Free from joy and sorrow, he is neither dead nor alive.

84. Glorious is the life of the wise one, *who is* free from expectation, free from attachment for children, wife and others, free from desire for the objects of the senses and free from care even of his own body.

85. Contentment ever dwells in the heart of the wise one, who lives on whatever *comes* to him, and wanders about at pleasure, resting *wherever* the sun sets.

86. Reposing on the foundation of his own being, and *forgetting his entire cycle of birth and rebirth*, the great-souled *person cares not* whether his body dies or is born.

87. Blessed is the wise one who stands *by himself*, who is attached to nothing, who is without any possession, who moves *freely*, who is free from the pairs of opposites and whose doubts have been rent asunder.

88. Glorious is the wise one who is devoid of '*mineness*', to whom earth, *stone or gold is* the same, the knots of whose heart have been rent asunder, and who has been purged of rajas and tamas.

89. Who is there to stand comparison with the liberated soul who has no desire whatsoever at heart, who is contented and indifferent to everything?

90. Who but the desireless one knows not *even* knowing, sees not *even* seeing and speaks not *even* speaking?

Doing and not doing are opposed and limited. But can there be any

limitation for a sage? He only appears to be acting, feeling. To him all is alike. When he sees he does not see. There is no difference.

There is consciousness alone in these two chairs. You tell me these are two chairs. And I can't see consciousness since I am consciousness. Here there is no perceiver. All is Ātmā.

When you act, feel you have no feeling about it. It only comes afterwards when you remember. But the sage who has no remembrance does not know anything. Even when you are saying or not saying.

91. Be he a mendicant or a king, he excels who is unattached and whose view of things has been freed from the sense of good and evil.
92. *What* is wantonness, *what* is restraint, *or what* is determination of Truth for the yogi, whose life's object has been fulfilled and who is the embodiment of guileless sincerity.
93. How and to whom can be described what is experienced within by one who is desireless, whose sorrow is destroyed, and who is contented with repose in the self?

It is never possible to explain what is experienced by a wise man.

94. Not asleep even *in sound sleep*, not *lying* even *in dream*, and not awake even in the waking state, *is* the wise one who is contented under all conditions.
95. The man of knowledge is devoid of thought even when *engaged* in thought, *devoid* of the sense organs even though *possessed* of them, *devoid* of intelligence even though endowed with it, and *devoid* of the sense of ego even though possessed of it.

Leave actions to your body and mind. That is one (witness). Then later the perceiver, which was aloof before, will now come back to cover up body and mind. Then they cease to exist. There is no more action and inaction, no more variety. Then all is Ātmā.

The first movement is enough to liberate you from rebirth. The second movement will come by itself. There all differentiation ceases. Only remembrance makes you a jīva.

You see. To think that you see, you are connecting two things. With a sage, memory is a thought rising spontaneously. But even the present does not exist. So there cannot even be a thought, when there is no eternal now any more.

From the highest centre, there is nothing except pure consciousness. There one's head will turn giddy. All is paradox. Can it be said it is consciousness? No! Nothing exists, nothing exists.

96. *He* is neither happy nor miserable, neither attached nor unattached, neither liberated nor an aspirant for liberation. *Nothing is existent, nothing is non-existent.*

97. The blessed one is not distracted even in distraction, *is* not meditative even in meditation, *is* not dull even in a state of dullness and *is* not learned even though possessed of learning.

Only in such a way can an attempt be made to explain the inexplicable. Every confusion gets cleared when you transcend the body idea.

98. The liberated one who rests in the self under all conditions, who is free from the idea of *actions* and of duty, and who is the same everywhere, does not, owing to desirelessness, reflect upon what he has or has not done.

99. Praised *he* does not feel pleased, and blamed he does not *get* annoyed. He neither rejoices in life nor fears death.

100. The tranquil-minded one *runs* neither *after* the crowded place, nor *after* the wilderness. He remains the same *in* any *condition* and in any place *whatsoever*.

19. Repose in Self

Janaka said:

Janaka speaks here as a sage. It is nothing for a sādḥaka.

1. I have extracted from the innermost recesses of my heart the thorn of different *disquisitions*, with the pincers of the knowledge of Truth.
2. For me who abide in my own glory, where is dharma, where is kāma, where is artha, where *is* discrimination, where is duality, and where is even non-duality?
3. For me *abiding* in my own glory, where is past, where is future, where is *ever* present, where is space, *or* where is even eternity?
4. Where is self *or* non-self, where likewise *is* good *or* evil, where is thought or non-thought for me who abide in my own glory?
5. Where is *dream*, where is deep sleep, where is wakefulness, where is the fourth state of turīya, and where is even fear for me who abide in my own glory?
6. Where is distance *or* proximity, *outside or inside*, grossness *or* subtlety, for me who abide in my own glory?
7. Where is death *or* life, where the worlds *or* worldly relations, where *dissolution or samādhi*, for me who abide in my own glory?
8. For me who *am* *reposing* in self, *there is no need of talking* about the three ends of life, about yoga and about wisdom.

20. *Liberation in Life*

Janaka said:

1. Where are the elements, the body, the organs, the mind, the void *or desirelessness, in my taintless being?*
2. What is scripture, what is *Ātmic* knowledge, what is mind *bereft of objects, what is contentment, or what is desirelessness, to me who am ever devoid of the sense of duality?*
3. What is knowledge *or what is ignorance, what is 'I', and what 'this', or what is 'mine', what is bondage or what is liberation, what is definableness of the self?*

Why do you give form to myself?

4. What are *prārabdha (commenced)* karmas, what is *even* liberation in life *or what is that liberation at death to the ever undifferentiated?*
5. What is the doer or enjoyer, what is cessation of *activity (thinking) or light, what is direct knowledge or its results, to me, the ever impersonal?*
6. What is the world, *or where is the aspirant for liberation, where is the yogi or where is the man of knowledge, where is the soul in bondage or where is the liberated soul, to me who am non-dual in nature?*
7. What are *projection and retraction, what are end and means, what are seeker and success to me abiding in my nature which is non-dual?*
8. Where is the knower, the means to knowledge, the object of knowledge, or knowledge, where is anything *or where is not anything to me who am ever pure?*
9. What is distraction *or concentration, dullness or delusion, joy or sorrow, to me who am ever actionless?*
10. Where is *worldly activity or reality, happiness or misery in me who am ever devoid of thought activity?*
11. Where is *māyā or samsāra, love or hatred, jīva or Brahman, to me who am ever pure?*

12. Where is activity *or* inactivity, liberation or bondage *to* me who am ever *kūṭastha* and indivisible and established in self?

Kūṭastha means the real part remaining over when one's body and mind are eliminated. That individual reality is the same as the ultimate principle. Here Aṣṭāvakra follows the psychological path. Since all is reduced to the self, to you, the pot cannot divide the ākāsha. Space cannot be limited by anything, though you think so.

13. Where *is* instruction *or* scriptural injunction, where is disciple *or* preceptor, where is the *summum bonum* of life, to me who am absolute good and free from limitation?
14. Where is existence *or* non-existence, unity *or* duality? What *to* say more, nothing emanates from me.